

WAGON-MASTERS, &c.—BOUNTY LAND.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

IN REFERENCE TO

*The preparing of evidence of service of wagon-masters, teamsters, &c.,
to enable them to obtain bounty land.*

JULY 26, 1856.—Referred to the Committee of Ways and Means.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, July 19, 1856.

SIR: I have the honor to enclose herewith a report of the Quartermaster General, stating that applications are made to him for evidence necessary to the settlement of claims of teamsters, wagon-masters, and others, for bounty land, and that the clerks in his office cannot, without neglecting their proper duties, prepare the evidence requested. I have, therefore, to submit the subject to the Committee of Ways and Means, and suggest that, if in their judgment it be proper to enable the Quartermaster General to respond to such applications, an appropriation of five thousand dollars be made for the hire of temporary clerks for the purpose.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
JEFF'N DAVIS,
Secretary of War.

Hon. L. D. CAMPBELL,
Chairman Committee Ways and Means, H. R.

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington City, July 17, 1856.

SIR: Applications have been made to this office, either direct, or through the Pension Office, for the evidence of service of wagon-masters, teamsters, and other persons employed in the Quartermaster's

Department in the Mexican war, and in other wars which preceded it, to enable them to obtain bounty lands under the provisions of an act of Congress of the 3d of March, 1855.

Now it is no part of my duty as Quartermaster General of the army to investigate and prepare evidence in bounty land cases; nor has Congress made it my duty by any one of the provisions of the act granting bounty lands; but, inasmuch as all the rolls and other documentary evidence of the service of the individuals claiming under the law are on the files of this office, the interests of those individuals, as well as of the public service, would seem to require that the several cases should be examined here, and the evidence be furnished by me. I would cheerfully execute the work if I had the means, but I have not the force to do it.

Under the arrangement made by you with the Department of the Interior, last year, two clerks were lent to this office by the Commissioner of Pensions. Those clerks were assiduously employed so long as they were permitted to remain in the office; but they were recalled during the last month. From November last, until they were recalled, they, with such aid as the limited force of the office could afford them, examined and prepared sixteen hundred and forty cases, which have been sent to the Pension Office. There are upwards of two thousand cases, now in the office, to be examined, and upwards of ten thousand more may be expected.

If it be intended that these cases shall be examined here, and they can be nowhere else so readily examined, three or four clerks, at least, will be necessary to bring the work up and to keep it up, until it be completed.

As the claimants will suffer by the delay in obtaining the bounty secured to them by law, arising from the lack of force to make the necessary examinations, I respectfully ask that three or four temporary clerks be added to the office for that work, or, what would probably be better, that an appropriation of five or six thousand dollars be asked, to be expended under the authority of the Secretary of War, in the payment of the persons who may be employed on the work.

I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

TH. S. JESUP,

Quartermaster General.

Hon. JEFFERSON DAVIS,

Secretary of War, Washington City.